

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I urge the FCC to strengthen current media ownership rules, which already allow far too much consolidation.

I take issue with the results of studies commissioned by the FCC; they don't reflect the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may technically be more media sources than ever before, the spectrum of views presented has become far more circumscribed and reflective of corporate interests only.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is a cornerstone of any republic. Thomas Jefferson believed that democracy was only possible with a critical and well-informed populace. If the FCC allows the continual consolidation of information sources, our ability to have an open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be further compromised.

The public interest would be best served by reviewing and STRENGTHENING the limitations on media ownership as they currently stand; relaxing them further would be a travesty.

In addition, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public. The rarified, lawyerly atmosphere of an FCC rulemaking is not an appropriate decision-making venue when questions as profound as the freedom of our media are at stake. I encourage the Commissioners to come out and meet some of the people who do not have a financial interest in this issue, but a social interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is important that the Commission take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

John Mead

